

Frobisher and Hawkins. London had become the centre of the world, and representatives from all known countries were in the new metropolis. The world had been doubled. The imagination had been touched and kindled by discovery. In the far horizon were unknown lands, strange shores beyond untraversed seas. Toward every part of the world were turned the prows of adventure. All these things fanned the imagination into flame, and this had its effect upon the literary and dramatic world. And yet Shakespeare—the master spirit of mankind—in the midst of these discoveries, of these adventures, mentioned no navigator, no general, no discoverer, no philosopher.

Galileo was reading the open volume of the sky, but Shakespeare did not mention him. This to me is the most marvellous thing connected with this most marvellous man.

At that time England was prosperous—was then laying the foundation of her future greatness and power.

When men are prosperous, they are in love with life. Nature grows beautiful, the arts begin to flourish, there is work for painter and sculptor, the poet is born, the stage is erected—and this life with which men are in love, is represented in a thousand forms.

Nature, or Fate, or Chance prepared a stage for Shakespeare, and Shakespeare prepared a stage for Nature.

Famine and faith go together. In disaster and want the gaze of man is fixed upon another world. He that eats a crust has a creed. Hunger falls upon its knees, and heaven, looked for through tears, is the mirage of misery. But prosperity brings joy and wealth and leisure—and the beautiful is born.

One of the effects of the world's awakening was Shakespeare. We account for this man as we do for the highest mountain, the greatest river, the most perfect gem. We can only say: He was.

"It hath been taught us from the primal state  
That he which is was wished until he were."

#### IV.

In Shakespeare's time the actor was a vagabond, the dramatist a disreputable person—and yet the greatest dramas were then written. In spite of law, and social ostracism, Shakespeare reared the many-colored dome that fills and glorifies the intellectual heavens.

Now the whole civilized world believes in the theatre—asks for some great dramatist—is hungry for a play worthy of the century, is anxious